TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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No. 92
November, 1953

Federated Churches

RALPH L. WILLIAMSON

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The study reported in this brief digest has been carried on from 1947 to 1951 by the writer, under the auspices of Drew University and the co-sponsorship of The Rural Church Institute, Ithaca, N. Y., and the Interboard Committee on Town and Country Work of the Methodist Church. It was undertaken in order to supply more knowledge about the federated plan of union. The report has been published by the Rural Church Institute, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The price is 25 cents per copy.

• A federated church is a union of two or more local congregations of different denominations into one congregation which keeps membership in and all relationships with the parent denominations.

This study discovered 603 federations existing in 1950. They were scattered throughout the United States with the greatest number in the northeast and middle states, and the least number in the southern states.

The movement toward federation arose in New England at an undetermined date. The Connecticut Congregational Conference took action in 1876 favoring federations and the earliest federation of which record has been found was at Truro, Mass., in 1887.

The greatest early development was in Vermont beginning with the first federation at East Dorset and Williston in 1899 and the third at Castleton in 1902. By 1919 the federated plan was being called "The Vermont Plan" in periodicals and books of the period. The earliest formation date of a presently existing federation in New York was 1917. New England, New York and Ohio have the greatest numbers of federations at present.

Scope

Approximately 100 churches were included in one or more of the phases of this study. They included 2,103 laymen, ministers and church or council executives.

The scope included visits to twenty-two churches in eight states.

The factors related to the success and failure of federations are population changes, economic conditions, spiritual vitality, pastoral training and ability, pastoral tenure, property adjustments, the federation process, articles of agreement, relations with the denominations, women's work, the social integration processes of assimilation and amalgamation, inter-personal and inter-group relations, and the spirit of union.

The attitudes of executives, pastors and people are, of course, important.

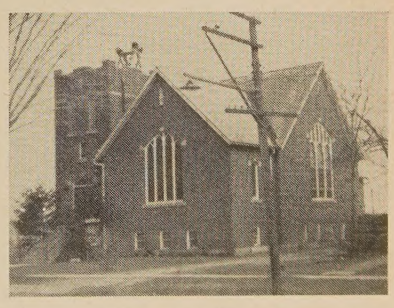
Conclusions

Federations are generally formed only in situations of declining population and social and economic conditions, and only after the failure of separate denominational programs has resulted in defeat.

The increase in rural population in many communities during the last twenty years has been favorable to the success of the federations formed earlier.

Federation is the type of local union most favored by laymen while the denominational community type is more preferred by church executives and pastors.

Lay members of federated churches feel that the denominational executives have been helpful in forming



Methodist Church
Panama, N. Y.

federations and are generally favorable to them.

No denomination had a majority of its superintendents desiring the veto power over the formation of federations.

A federating process which is gradual and uses educational methods, if carried through by a representative local committee, is likely to result in a successful union.

Laymen initiate discussion of union and federation more frequently than executives and pastors.

Federations with carefully written Articles of Agreement are less likely to develop misunderstandings, uncertainties, and to fail.

Federations are usually organized primarily to keep an adequately supported pastor resident on the field.

Federations usually are handicapped with too much property, and it is in bad repair.

The alternation of pastors and limiting of their terms has often proved unworkable. This results in a less suitable ministry to the churches and is seldom adhered to.

The pastors of federations usually have college and seminary training. A few of those in the most successful churches have had specialized rural training, at least in short courses. Still fewer have had training in ecumenicity.

Success is aided by close relations with the denominations, and most federations maintain them with a fair degree of success.

Denominational benevolences usually increase considerably after federation, still more after the property improvements are accomplished.

Christian education materials are usually selected from the various denominations and are woven more or less successfully into one pattern for the local church.

New federations usually go through a few years of adjustment before greatly noticeable improvement occurs.

Most federations show a new evangelistic power.

Property adjustments are usually accomplished only after a trial period of three years or more.

The pastors of federated churches find the maintenance of dual or triple denominational relationships burdensome.

Denominational superintendents are frequently baffled concerning how to administer federated churches and there is little effort to collaborate in supervision.

Togetherness is emphasized in many federations and is most noticeable in the more successful federations where the social processes of integration have developed far toward complete assimilation and amalgamation of the people into one united whole.

Theological differences seldom are a problem, for the churches which usually federate are of somewhat similar liturgical practice and theological belief, and there is a willingness to compromise.

Implications

Denominational leaders should seek to strengthen existing federations by closer and cooperative supervision, encourage the formation of federated churches as the best solution for some communities, and develop a common reporting system which will give the total picture of federations in the yearbooks.

Church council leaders should disseminate literature and encourage the formation of federations as one important type of local union, conduct surveys preliminary to the development of federations, serve as neutral advisors to local committees on federation, and help denominational executives both to develop comity arrangements and to learn how to administer federated churches.

All local churches should build up a pattern of cooperative relationships with sister churches as a preliminary step to possible future union as well as immediate service to the community. Existing federations need to consolidate the ownership and control of property under one of the effective plans now in use and put all property into good repair and everyday use in the program of the church and community. They need to strengthen their denominational ties, keep their pastors for longer tenures, and emphasize the spirit of togetherness.

Family Farm Situation

• There are 1,000,000 fewer farms than there were thirty years ago but most of them are family operated, according to Jackson V. McElveen, reviewing data from the 1950 Census of Agriculture in *The Agricultural Situation,* published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, November, 1952.

The 1950 data, compared with those of previous decades, are revealing of many trends:

"To produce 100 bushels of corn 40 years ago, took 135 man-hours; in recent years only 45 man-hours were required. . . . The operators of many small farms have been faced with the need for enlarging their farms in order to take advantage of the gains from mechanization. The saving in labor resulting from mechanization has often prompted farmers to seek additional land. . . . The source of land for making farms larger has been, for the most part, in combining farms. A farmer, for example, buys or rents land near his farm to make it larger. It is among the small family-farms—the ones from 10 to 99 acres—that changes have been most pronounced."

Rural Church Methods

• "There are some ingenious plans for rural churches with which several of the state conferences and some town and country parishes are successfully experimenting," writes Thomas Alfred Tripp in a booklet, *Successful Rural Church Methods,* prepared for the Committee on the Marginal Church, Town and Country Department, Congregational Christian Churches, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Each of the ten chapters illustrates a method: Life Ministry, Minister-at-Large, Regional Ministry, Town-centered Parish, Lay Preachers, Radio, Regional Rural Life Centers, Yoked Fields, Larger Parish, the Lord's Acre Plan. Here and there in the pamphlet the Committee on the Marginal Church suggests "emphases."

The Rural Church Institute

PAUL WORK

• The Rural Church Institute, through its directors, the Rev. Ralph Williamson and the Rev. Stanley Skinner, undertakes to do for country churches in the State of New York about what state colleges do for farmers through the services of research, teaching and extension.

One of the services of the Rural Church Institute is to help communities that are interested in the substitution of cooperation for competition among local churches. When its help is sought, its workers assist in such surveys as may be needed and in presenting possible plans as well as the experience of other groups.

Initiative Gets Results

Those who travel Route 20 in New York State are familiar with the hamlet of Pompey Hill, high up on a ridge just south of Syracuse. Here two congregations, one Methodist, the other Presbyterian, formerly struggled to keep the lights burning. They have now federated and there is new life in the parish.

In the Groton area of Tomkins County and in Southern Cayuga the larger parish plan has been serving for years. The congregations retain their identity but work together in arranging for pastoral service and preaching, in united young people's work, and especially in providing week-day religious education and vacation Bible schools to supplement the short time available on Sundays.

In some cases actual union has followed federation, as at Preble where Methodist and Presbyterian churches united as a Congregational church. Altogether, New York has about 165 parishes where some form of comity is in practice, a larger number than in any other state. Denominational officers and committees are in many cases cooperating whole-heartedly, feeling that the Kingdom comes before the sect and that the denominations gain by exchanging weak churches for strong and active ones.

Training

Were you to come to Ithaca, New York, on a Saturday afternoon, you would be likely to see one to several cars of Cornell University students setting off for a weekend of service and experience. Under the guidance of Director Ralph Williamson and Jean Whittet of Cornell United Religious Work, five teams are taking assignments to churches not too far away and each making four or five trips a season.

They go to a parish, visit in the afternoon, help stage a young people's party in the evening, assist with church school and the worship service in the morning and then return to their books. Thus these young collegians, mostly in agriculture or home economics, are learning things that will be priceless to them and to their communities after they graduate.

Many Workers

Country church people know about Rural Life Sunday, Harvest Festivals, and the Lord's Acre Plan. All of these are sucessfully promoted by Rural Church Institute. CROP, Heifers and Goats for Relief, and migrant work have all had active help from the Institute staff members. Contributions are made to several radio and TV programs, some now carried by local groups.

Continued on page 4

Winston Pote from A. Devaney, N. Y.

This is only part of the story. Who does all this, you ask? Just Director Ralph Williamson and Associate Director Stanley Skinner, with the faithful help of Mrs. Carrie Scheltz, office secretary. Both directors are experienced rural pastors, and they are sawing wood every day of the week. They see a lot more to saw, if only there were more than twenty-four hours in a day! They do have constantly increasing volunteer help from ministers and lay people all over the state.

The Institute serves as the rural department of the New York State Council of Churches and works closely with county councils where they exist.

Farm Groups

One of the most encouraging features of Rural Church Institute growth has been the increasing interest and support of the leaders and members of farm organizations. The Grange, Home Bureau and 4-H Clubs have given wonderful support, especially in setting up union community observances of Rural Life Sunday. The College of Agriculture at Cornell has been unstinting in lending its services.

Financial Aid

And who provides the money for this good work? The budget is about $16,500, as much as is raised by three moderately strong rural churches. The New York State Council of Churches meets about a quarter of the cost; a small amount comes from denominational agencies. Most of the rest is from personal gifts and memberships and from Rural Life Sunday and Harvest Festival observances.

The Task

The present task is to acquaint more people with the significance of the spiritual values in rural life. This done, there will be little question about the support of our country churches, their valiant ministers and their wives and children, and of other agencies that are working to the same consecrated ends.

—The American Agriculturist

The World Picture

AARON H. RAPKING

• The news came over the air this morning that 100,000 persons have come from East Germany into West Germany for food that America is making available. The leading Russian newspapers are claiming that Russia has won a great victory in Korea and that as a result of the armistice it was going to be possible to bring about better relationships in other parts of the world.

A New Era

If China will sincerely cast her vote for world peace, then indeed we may be entering an era in the unfolding world picture that will bring about great progress in realizing the prophet's dream, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

Christians around the world have been praying that the terrible destruction of human life and the colossal waste of the natural resources might cease. Perhaps in a much larger way than we give God credit for, he has answered our prayers. I am of the opinion that if we were more grateful for the prayers God does answer we would be on a much sounder praying basis.

The Way of Peace

While the past weeks, months and years have been critical in the unfolding world picture, the coming years will also be very critical years. The coming battles will be fought in the realms of ideas, attitudes and faith—faith in God and faith in man.

The thinking of the world has been conditioned by selfish motives and lust for power so long that only by the "grace of God" will the world move upward to higher and higher levels of living. The world is in the process of being converted from the way of war (hell on earth) to the way of peace (more of heaven on earth).

The conversion of the individual is only the first step in the development of a Christ-like personality. Establishing a world court and world police force to check the criminals who put self first and above God will also only be the first steps in the redemption of the world.

Dynamic Factors

We, as Christians, are challenged as Christians never have been before to believe that not only individuals, but families, communities, nations, in fact the world can be a better place in which to live by our faith, our hope, our love and our prayers.

These are great days for Christians and the church—the fellowship of believers in Christ and in each other. Every Christian, every church organization, in fact every organization that is motivated by love for God and man, can be dynamic factors in radiating faith, hope and love and by so doing help God overcome evil influences at work around the world.

Postville, Iowa

• Not many years ago the average Sunday morning attendance at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, in a northeastern Iowa village, was around 40. Today, the congregation numbers 1,800, and its current budget totals $24,000.

The change took place in 1938 when the Rev. Frederick R. Ludwig came to town, writes Clifton M. Weihe, as he tells the story in a recent issue of *The Lutheran*:

"The first noticeable gain was in church attendance. . . . Then a building program faced the congregation. Room was needed both for the educational program and for worship services. The church building and the parish hall underwent a transformation. . . . As people came to church with their gifts and pledges, $80,000 was given! Men and boys gave thousands of man-hours of labor for the building projects and found their overalled pastor working by their side."

A new pastor has come to St. Paul's this fall (the Rev. Charles E. Witt, formerly of Marshfield, Wis.) but the congregation is "determined that the lighted cross atop Postville's hill shall continue to be a guiding light for the region round about."

Town & Country Church

Published monthly (except June, July, August) by the Department of Town and Country Church, Division of Home Missions, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

20c a copy; $1.50 a Year

Publication Office: Tenth and Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa.

Editorial Office: 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Cooperation and the Moral Crisis*

MURRAY D. LINCOLN

• The total world food production today, according to United Nations figures, is not much more than in 1938, but population has increased by some 200,000,000. In the United States, meanwhile, food production has shot up twenty-five per cent in the last ten years while population has increased only twelve per cent. In other words, people in this part of the world are much better off than they were, in food supply, but people in other parts of the world are worse off. And most of those people live in parts of the world that are menaced by communism.

What we have is not one world at all, but two worlds. In one world there is hunger and disease; there is no freedom, no friendship and little hope. Can we ourselves, with our plenty, long remain free when a billion other people, neighbors of ours, are imprisoned by hunger?

Evil Forces

Physically, nations are armed to the teeth, racing hell-bent for military supremacy, rushing headlong toward the precipice of atomic war. Economically, conflict in the world stems from the fact that economic action is so often hitched up to the interests of privileged classes of producers rather than to the interests of the people as consumers. And social conflict, as well as physical and economic conflict, finds expression in the hostility and bad manners between races, castes, people with skins of different colors, and religious groups with different creeds.

Besides hunger and conflict, fear is another of the great evil forces in the world which fuel our moral crisis, the fear that comes from lack of faith, from intellectual weakness, from loss of a sense of purpose, from negativism. So obsessed has America become with the search for Communists that she is in grave danger of losing her way of life, not so much to communism itself as to fear of communism.

Hunger, conflict, and fear, then, are the evil forces in the world which feed our moral crisis and make it such a threat to the welfare of mankind.

Moral Purpose

Responsibility for world leadership rests with the people of the free world. We must not let our material wealth and power blind us to the fact that humility and sympathy also make a country and a people strong.

We have been ignoring our great religious principles. "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost" too often has superseded "Love thy neighbor as thyself" as our guide for action. We may know what Jesus Christ taught about brotherhood, but we pay too little attention. We repeat the Golden Rule, but we do not use it.

I firmly believe that the key to the right solution of this great moral crisis, the way to justify our position of leadership in North America, the way to heed the pangs of our social conscience and to construct a positive moral alternative to war, lies through cooperation—economic, political, social and spiritual cooperation.

As we learn and work together, as we help each other, so shall we mend the broken pieces of the world's moral fabric. Cooperation is an economic process, but it is more than that, it is educational and spiritual and human.

Economic Cooperation

We've made a small start in the United States at economic cooperation. Credit unions have nearly 7,000,000 members with more than a billion dollars in assets. Most of our farmers belong to cooperatives of various kinds. Rural electric cooperatives have brought light and power to more than half of the nation's farms. Cooperatively-minded casualty companies rank near the top

* From an address at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

in volume of automobile insurance sold in the United States. We're tackling the problems of health and housing cooperatively on an ever-widening scale. And we're trying, through CARE, the International Cooperative Alliance, and many other groups, to exert similar influence internationally.

Development of international cooperative trade would be a most important move for peace, because so often war results from the economic strains and tensions which arise between commercial interests of different nations. International cooperative trading is an act of friendship.

Other Countries

Cooperatives have been recognized as having the most efficient system of commodity distribution in Europe. In Germany one of the first actions of the American Military Government was to return the cooperatives to the control of their member-owners. And in Italy, cooperatives are credited with doing more to develop agriculture than any other single agency.

But it is not just in Europe that cooperatives are helping to show the way to a more abundant life. Co-ops have given new life and hope to millions of Japanese. They are making great strides in the Philippines and other parts of Asia. In India and Burma village handicraft and fish net cooperatives are helping to lift the standard of living. In the Middle East, in Lebanon, on the Mediterranean, cooperation is revolutionizing the rural economy.

Government Cooperation

Cooperation is making progress, too, in other than economic fields. The very fact that the United States is a member of the United Nations indicates an advance in political cooperation over our head-in-the-sand isolation following World War I. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO for short) has opened a regional education center in Egypt where it is training teachers from six Arab countries as specialists in combatting disease, poverty and ignorance.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is ten years old. It is, in effect, an international cooperative whose members are the governments of sixty-eight countries.

FAO people have entered most of the slum areas of the world. They have fought rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease and other animal plagues. They have fought locusts which may breed in one country and then swarm thousands of miles to strip the crops of another.

The Point IV program (now officially the Technical Cooperation Administration) is another instance of governmental cooperation.

These examples of voluntary and political cooperation are drops in the bucket of human need. There is no doubt in my mind that if the free world were actually to go all-out on a crusade to help other people help themselves and spread the benefits of freedom and plenty over the world, communism would fall of its own weight and the people's dream of peace and plenty could come true.

Men *can* learn to live together. The testimony of the centuries cannot be denied. We must keep the idea of cooperation alive, strengthen it and make it grow. As long as it lives, so long shall hope for mankind live.

Machinery vs. Mules

• The rapidity of change in the agricultural South is noted by C. C. Brown who established the first farm equipment dealership in the Chipola River (Fla.) Soil Conservation District in 1936. Brown points out that there were only six farm tractors in the three counties of the district at that time. He estimates that there are now 1,800.

—From *Soil Conservation*

Member of Grange for 77 Years

• Miss Ida Searles has been a member of Chelsea Grange in Maine for 77 years. Although 92 years of age, she is still active in both Grange and Church.

The Rural Minister's Call

FRANK R. MEASE

• In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. . . . And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for me? Then I said, Here am I: send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people."

The Rural Missions

It is not for everyone to receive that call as Isaiah did. Yet all who seek the high office of minister to rural folk feel a definite call to give themselves for life to the rural ministry. This is their mission!

The rural minister goes forth to this field, not with the idea of using it as a stepping stone to some "bigger field" but with the idea of settling down for life under the stars. He will not be too much concerned with temporal rewards, but will have an abiding sense of eternal values.

Does a call to the rural ministry mean sacrifice? Indeed it does! But what true ministry means anything less? If the rural pastorate is your heart's desire, then go! Go with a sense of divine mission, bearing the Gospel of peace, goodwill to men—and fear not!

As John Oman states it in his book, *Concerning the Ministry*, "Where there is no vision, not only the people perish but also the preacher. But where there is true faith resting on vision, you have been called to the rural ministry."

Your Harvest Festival

• Have you overlooked ordering *An Order of Service for a Harvest Festival?* If you have, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches in the U.S.A., 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $2.60 for each 100 copies.

Through the Visible to the Invisible*

M. M. COADY

• The formula for the good society of the future is going to be the manipulation of commonplace things, the re-patterning of the forces that determine the life of man on this earth. The most fundamental among these things are: food, shelter, clothing, physical and economic security and freedom for the human spirit.

I can hear some of you saying, "That is vile materialism." But I say to you that it is high spirituality—seeing the spiritual aspect of created material things. We should not be fooled by externals. Real spirituality goes deeper, sees God in material things, and recognizes that the laws of nature are his handwriting in the world he created.

Universal Rainbow

We all admire the rainbow, the arc of hope that God puts in the empyrean from time to time, but after all, the rainbow, if we examine it scientifically, can be reduced to a very simple physical phenomenon. It is nothing more than the result of tiny particles of water acting as prisms to break up the most commonplace of all things, the white light with which we have been familiar all the days of our lives.

These small particles of water, by a Divine decree, have the power to unlock the seven colors, the spectrum of beauty that the Creator hid away from our worldly and carnal eyes. This is the real poetry and spirituality of one of our most beautiful natural phenomenon.

In the same way, the formula by which the good society of the future can be built will be found when we discover how to release from the commonplace relationships of man to man in society the forces that lie hidden in them. When we do this we can put a universal rainbow on the social horizon that will flash a ray of hope to all mankind.

Spirituality

Speaking as a theologian, I am on very safe ground. Through the visible and material things of this world we rise to a knowledge and appreciation of the invisible things of God.

This doctrine is the very essence of the parable of the good Samaritan. The traveler was waylaid by robbers and left wounded on the highway. A lot of people passed him by, among them a Levite—and there are an awful lot of them in North America. But the poor Samaritan passing by had pity on him, put oil on his wounds, put him on his donkey (I don't know anything more material than that), and took him to the inn. And when he got him to the inn he put his hand in his pocket and took out the cold, hard cash, and told the inn-keepr to look after him and if there was anything more to pay he would take care of it on his return. The whole performance was a series of materialistic acts.

Our Lord did not hesitate to use these material things to teach us spirituality. Surely that should be good enough for us.

My message to you, then, is to dedicate your lives to this business of building, according to these specifications, the good society of the future.

* From the closing address at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

The Lord's Acre

• Toilers for a harvest that will directly benefit their church are members of the Men's Bible Class of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Jefferson, Md. The men planted more than twenty acres of corn on shares they pledged to the building fund of St. Paul's Church. $40,000 worth of farm equipment, including sixteen tractors, was used to plow, harrow and seed the acreage. Exceptional teamwork enabled the men to complete the job in a single day.

—The Lutheran

More Than Beauty

FRED D. WENTZEL

• The earth is beautiful. The white silence of winter's snow, the singing green of spring, the golden eloquence of a wheat field in summer, the shouting colors on autumn hills —all invite us to rejoice in the beauty of the world.

Kinship

But those who follow Jesus, who obey his word, "Behold, the lilies of the field," go beyond an appreciation of the beautiful in nature. They are not mere observers, noting with approval the symmetry of line and the harmony of color with which the earth is so lavish. Somehow this symmetry and harmony enter into their souls. They become part of what they see and hear. They recognize that they are brothers of the earth and rejoice in this sense of kinship with her.

We are to be more than students of nature, more than admirers of the varied artistry of the earth. We are to be friends and lovers of nature, at home with the earth, aware that we and the earth belong to one marvelous creation.

"The Everlasting Mercy"

In his classic poem, "The Everlasting Mercy," John Masefield tells the story of the conversion of Saul Kane. His words give clear evidence that now, for the first time, Saul feels right toward God, toward his neighbors and toward the natural world. He knows a joyful kinship, not only with the Creator whom he has hitherto spurned but also with the whole creation—soil, water, grass, flower, tree, wind, sun, moon, star, and all living creatures.

And what was the meaning of this overwhelming, luminous change in the life of Saul Kane? This is what the poet laureate of England says:

I did not think, I did not strive,
The deep peace burnt by me alive;
The bolted door had broken in,
I knew that I had done with sin.
I knew that Christ had given me birth
To brother all the souls on earth,
And every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.

U.S.D.A. Photograph by Madeleine Osborne

The Call of the Country*

DANIEL E. LaMASTER

Scripture: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin: yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Matthew 6:28-29.

Text: "Your hair is like a flock of goats moving down the slopes of Gilead." Song of Solomon 4:1.

• The scripture verses remind us that Solomon's glory is not a match for nature, and no one knew this better than he. As a boy, Solomon ran high up into the hills with the goat herds and played on the rocky slopes with his friends. The boys remembered those days as the happiest of their lives.

Song of Praise

But a new stage of life was upon Solomon now. He was in love! Moved to write an expression of his love, his mind drifted back to his boyhood. Once again he saw the great streaming herd of silky black goats following their leader down the mountain side to the camp where they waited patiently in line to be milked.

From a distance, the animals gave one the impression of a cascading waterfall—rolling, tumbling downward, dividing here and there to surround a huge boulder, then reuniting to roll on in a seemingly endless river of ebony.

Out of the countryside came a call of love to Solomon, a challenge of matchless beauty to one who knew and loved things natural.

This challenge is as great today as it was then. From the countryside I hear three challenges:

Challenge in People

Life in the countryside calls for the best, the strongest and most worthwhile men on earth.

An alfalfa patch isn't usually an attractive sight—an off-green color, stubby plants, not tall and waving like a majestic field of wheat. Often it is infested with swarms of blister bugs; and yet, is there anyone who would deny the value of an alfalfa patch? It sends shoots deep, leaves nitrogen, making it possible for the wheat later to grow tall and graceful.

That is the challenge to find good in people, regardless of their appearance.

One afternoon I took one of our shut-ins for a short ride. This woman is scarcely able to care for herself, yet after a little talk about the Lord's Acre project she asked, with all sincerity, "What can I do?" I wish that more of us felt as deeply the challenge as that shut-in member of our church.

There are those who live the philosophy that "Only the best is good enough for the countryside"—men like Doc Seeby, who strive to bring the best possible medical care to places where many feel that we should be satisfied with practically none, and others like Eugene Smathers of Big Lick, Tennessee, who, although he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity, didn't go in search of a big city church, but only intensified his efforts to meet the spiritual needs of a small town.

Challenge in Nature

The picturesque goats we spoke of a few moments ago are today the symbol of poverty, pain, and exploitation. The hills where Solomon watched the goats are now brown wastelands, washed full of gullies, with nothing but barren rocks and blowing sand.

The goat herds are now starved as they run from one thistle to the next, gobbling up even the thorny flowers and leaving nothing but a stalk to brown in the heat. Justice William O. Douglass refers to these conditions in his book, *Strange Lands and Friendly People.*

That which was once the symbol of life, beauty and even love is now a symbol of starvation and grief because of exploitation of natural resources.

Let that be a call to you and to me to do all we can to preserve the natural beauty of the country as God left it to us.

Give of Your Best

Have you ever wondered why Jesus did not go to Rome with his miracles? Why not there amidst the multitudes of military masters where every thought of medieval mind was moulded? Could he not have won the world himself?

No. The call he heard was greater. Instead of high courts, he chose hillsides. In preference to Caesar, Jesus spoke to citizens. Rather than a broad platform, our Lord stood on the banks of the Jordan. He heard the call of the countryside.

Jesus said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God." I wonder how many of us are *fit,* if we reject the call and challenge in the

*From the rural life sermon which won first prize in a contest conducted by Phillips University, Enid, Okla., 1953.

countryside with the thought that it is not good enough. It was good enough for Jesus.

Are you wondering what to do with your life, where to spend your days and talent? Look to Christ, follow him and ye shall not surely miss THE CALL OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.

Iowa Christian Rural Fellowship

• When the Iowa Christian Rural Fellowship was established in 1935, its directors and officers were leaders in rural educational and agricultural programs who were interested in helping develop cooperative Christian work. More recently, a fifty-fifty representation has been maintained between lay and professional church workers with a rural lay leader and a rural pastor or church organization leader serving as president on alternate years.

When the officers and directors of the Fellowship held their spring meeting, eight activities were discussed. Brief mention of each indicates the type of service now being rendered by the association:

The suggestion that next year's Rural Pastor's Institute theme be "The Christian Farmer in a Commercial Economy" was discussed and approved.

The Iowa Christian Rural Fellowship cooperated with the Extension Service of Iowa State College in presenting certificates of merit at the 1953 Iowa Rural Pastor's Institute to eighty-six churches in fifty-one counties. Similar awards will be made for 1953 at the 1954 Iowa Rural Pastors' Institute.

Each of the churches which qualified for the awards reported on religious programs and community service.

It was agreed that Harvest Festival programs can best be featured statewide on the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving, and that further promotion can be developed through the Iowa Council of Churches and the Extension Service of the Iowa State College, also that more use should be made of radio and television facilities in promoting this service.

"Community Tools" for rural church leaders were discussed with reference to aids available from the Extension Service of Iowa State College.

Four Farm Needs for Higher Food Output

• There are four requirements if a farmer is to make any real, sustained increase in production, according to N. E. Dodd, Director-General of FAO.

"The farmer must have security of tenure on his land," Mr. Dodd says. "He must have easy access to credit at reasonable rates. He must have markets which pay him a fair return for his products. And he must have some sort of educational system available to teach him good farming practices." —FAO MEMO

A Morning Meditation

• God who made the earth and all who dwell therein, let thy radiant love remove the man-made confusion which separates me from thee. With heart-rending shame I share the guilt of this age for professing piety while failing to help feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

As I go forth into the labor of this day let my purpose to reflect thy generosity and compassion be most obvious in the care with which I harvest the winter's supply and the kindness which I show to my thirsty team. I pray because I believe that the hungry, the naked, the grain, the team and I are all encompassed within thy eternal design and purpose. *Amen.* —JAMES D. WYKER

Photo by Eva Luoma

Horticulturist's Horizon

E. STUART HUBBARD

• For more than half a century I have lived in a Florida orange grove and potato field, and on a Hudson Valley grass, vegetable and apple farm. It has been my privilege as a child and throughout my lifetime to sit at the feet of pioneer horticulturists, from the time modern plant culture was being developed commercially, and to listen to their experiences and musings about the growing of trees and plants.

Curiosity and a quest for the "reasons why," conditioned by a whimsical willingness to question for fallibility of even the scientific idols of the moment, have provided a breadth of horizon, not common to the student trained in the scientific method without a background of life among living things growing or being grown under many varying conditions, successfully or as tragic failures.

Environmental Ideal

In scanning this horizon, certain things stand out as firmly as the everlasting hills. First, there is the reverent admiration we must feel when we stand at the foot of an oak, a cypress, a hemlock or a pine which has grown to perfection in its ideal soil and environment, as did its ancestors through countless years, without the help or hindrance of man. This is equally true be it the moisture-loving cardinal flower or the wild iris; the lichen on its rock, or the grass in its prairie.

In contrast, but as inevitably true, is the pitiful sight of these same species struggling to survive when growing in less ideal locations or suffering from abnormal conditions of moisture, climate, disturbed soil cover, or the introduction of competing species or alien insects or diseases to which the species has built up no defense or immunity.

The horticulturist must study the intricate workings of nature in its cycle of life, death and return to Mother Earth for the operation, season by season, of the wheel of life. Through science we may learn that the soil provides many kinds of minerals in varying proportions and combinations. Scientists may show how fungi, animals, insects and microbal organisms provide certain hormones and antibiotic substances, and how they perform various mechanical and chemical operations necessary in the multiplicity of their blended effects for the best growth and health of the growing thing.

An Old Profession

The horticulturist is, however, a member of a profession as old as the higher life on this earth. From Adam on, it has been his responsibility to tend God's garden. When he has worked in harmony with and understanding of God's laws, he and his people have been prosperous and healthy. When he has eaten of the forbidden fruit and has taken unto himself the function of deciding where and how a plant shall grow in the light of his limited knowledge and his mortal stature, too often the natural health and perfection of the plant are lacking, as is evident when its species is located in an unnatural, unfavorable environment.

Is it not reasonable to believe that man can best tend God's garden by learning as much as he may of the conditions that are operating in the life cycle of our finest specimens of trees and plants while growing in natural conditions?

Scientific Knowledge

The best production of a plant growing in its natural environment, without interference, may not be sufficient to feed a hungry world. Ideal natural soil and location may not be available.

It would seem to be the function of the horticulturist to use the developed scientific knowledge of what constitutes the ideal, natural conditions for the growth of the species; to learn what departures from ideal conditions result in variations in improved or in hindered growth and health; and to apply such knowledge so as to provide, as nearly as possible, all elements essential to the best performance of the plant.

Perfection From Harmony

The foreground of my horizon has many glorious examples of the perfection that the Divine Plan intends when harmony is maintained. The intelligent, sympathetic touch of those who tend their part of God's garden adds to the vigor, the health, the increase and the beauty of its living things.

There are, also, barren, wasted, pitiful areas where man in his ignorance, willfulness and greed has done what he should not have done and has left undone that which he should have done in tending his garden.

In the long future, which I shall not see, I have confidence that the horticultural horizon will increase in beauty and productivity as men learn to appreciate more fully the beneficent workings of the creatures in our Creator's systems for good growing of the living things in his garden.

—Reprinted, with permission, from THE RURAL NEW YORKER

Churches Rush Aid to Flood Victims

• Stricken peoples in the Kyushu and Wakayam districts of Japan, hit successively by floods called as damaging as the 1923 earthquake, have been sent immediate help by U.S. churches operating through Church World Service.

On Kyushu Island, 640 persons were killed, 1,600 injured and more than 100 missing. Nearly 40,000 homes were either partially or completely destroyed, and rice fields and other crop areas were severely damaged. Church World Service immediately sent 63,000 pounds of powdered milk to Japan, and sent also one million vitamin capsules, other food, clothing and cash.

Church World Service is a department of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Community Outreach

• The Department of Town and Country Church of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 1720 Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis 3, Mo., has published—in an 18-page pamphlet—stories of Evangelical and Reformed town and country churches which are truly serving their communities. The collection, which bears the title, "Community Outreach of Town and Country Churches," was prepared by Dr. Claude J. Snyder. It may be procured from the above address for 15 cents. The story of Hope Church, Cosby, Mo., is reprinted below:

What Do You See?

A minister once went to see a church which had received some mention in the church paper. But he was disappointed. He said to the pastor: "Why, you don't have as good a building as I have." To which the reply was given, "That's right; but you cannot see a program by looking at the building."

The people of Hope Evangelical and Reformed Church, Cosby, Missouri, have often tried to discover some way to improve their equipment. The present church was built without architectural advice; so now they cannot add to it or alter it without considerable difficulty. But they have found other ways of improvement, in program and community service.

Membership

The congregation has almost doubled its membership in the past ten years. There has been little population change in the community. Some other churches in their parish have closed in that time; but Hope has today a membership of 220—and 211 of them communed during the past year! That is a high record. And there are 207 church school students enrolled—with an average attendance of 137. That is 66 per cent—5 per cent more than the denominational average.

Program

A neighbor donated land for a recreation field, and it has been provided with lights. There is plenty of activity there in the summer months. The church has an excellent young people's choir, which is also frequently interested in preparing a play. During the summer months the outdoor Sunday evening services on the lighted church grounds are exceptionally well attended. Recently a group of twenty-five young couples met to plan a program of advance. A score or more people, living in nearby St. Joseph, Missouri (with a population of 80,000) come regularly to worship services at Hope Church.

Hope might have been one of those churches that declined and died; or it might just have kept going at about the same size as years before. But the present pastor has been serving them for ten years. Maybe there is something in a long and active pastorate!

Sermons in Soil

• Passages of Scripture are seen from a new perspective by some Negro ministers in North Carolina. After a study of soil and water conservation during six weeks of in-service training, they take a serious view of responsibility for land stewardship.

This was a part of the annual training of active ministers of the Zion Baptist Association. They represent a total of thirty-eight churches located in Anson and Union Counties, and have a combined membership of 4,783. A number of the ministers are farmers as well as preachers.

That these ministers will use the knowledge and inspiration acquired there is little doubt. A very early incident during the study course bears out that conclusion. Bob Horton, local soil scientist, has been out on a field trip with the class. They had examined soil profiles, found out how to guage effective depth and so on. On the way back to town a member of the class rode with Bob. They were talking as they went along, Bob doing most of it to drive home some impressive soil facts. "There you are, Mr. Horton," his companion said. "You have given me a subject for my next Sunday's sermon."

—H. N. Kelly
Soil Conservation

A Farmer's Prayer for Thanksgiving

• Lord of harvests, Keeper of our feedlots and orchards, we thank thee for a turkey that is fat. We thank thee for bread with butter on it. Would we could set music to the glorious autumn song of praise that rises from these frosted, browning stalks of corn, bent with ears of gold. Accept the fragrance of red clover in yon mow as burnt incense rising from the holy earthen altar of this stock-farm. Help us to be humble, just, and kind as thy servant said—especially kind to those creatures over whom thou gave us original dominion, which we have subdued and fattened and multiplied and milked according to thy direction. Make us good shepherds to them as thou art the Good Shepherd to us. Bless all thine own children about this board or absent from it. And make our hearts big enough to receive thy bounty in constant Thanksgiving. *Amen.*

—Samuel R. Guard
From *The Farmer Says Grace*

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Denominational Town and Country Church Departments

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

• Guidance to rural churches is given by denominational town and country departments. The older and stronger religious bodies each maintain such a department, usually within their board of home missions. Those departments carry on their cooperative work through the Department of the Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The town and country department of a denomination usually is charged with the work of contributing to the welfare of the rural churches. In order to meet the demands of this general objective, a few denominations have prepared outlines of goals and functions.

While each denominational rural program has its distinctive features there is considerable similarity among them. The following program of the town and country department of the Congregational-Christian Church is probably about average. From a study of it the rural pastor will have some idea of what services he is justified to request from his denomination:

The Rural Pastor

Security for rural pastors including an adequate minimum salary, satisfactory parsonage, allowance for size of family, expenses of car operation, provision of health and retirement benefits, and recognition of the professional status of the rural minister through inclusion in committees and programs of the state and other church agencies.

Education for Rural Ministers

Scientifically and educationally adequate rural church curricula offered by schools of theology. . . . Available graduate study opportunities in agricultural colleges and other institutions. . . . Continuing education through in-service training in summer schools, short courses and institutes.

Field Organization

An active town and country committee in each state. . . . Association town and country committees related to the state committee.

Cooperation

Participation in the town and country program of the National Council of Churches. . . . Encouraging rural churches to be active in interdenominational movements. . . . Participating in rechurching rural America and in comity arrangements. . . . Representation in the annual National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country of the National Council of Churches. . . . Rural pastors subscribing to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, the interdenominational periodical of the National Council of Churches.

Rural Churchmanship

Preparation and distribution of literature giving program materials for the rural church. . . . Extension of research in rural life and parish techniques. . . . Increased experimentation through regional rural life centers. . . . Exploitation of the approach being made by demonstration parishes. . . . Care and use of church property and equipment.

Community Approach

Cooperating with national agencies such as farm organizations, colleges of agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture. . . . Every rural church a community-minded church, cooperating with other community agencies.

Problem Areas

Reaching neglected rural areas between the parishes. . . . Evangelism adapted to rural areas. . . . Rural churches overcoming stratification by serving all classes. . . . Extending parish boundaries for a coverage of rural America. Service to isolated families through radio and other programs.

Missionary-Mindedness

Christian stewardship adapted to rural areas. . . . Participation in the home missionary enterprise. . . . Acquaintance with the Christian world mission. . . . The program of benevolences adapted to rural churches.

Spiritual Emphases

Enriching worship in the rural church. . . . Theological preaching in the rural pulpit. . . . Adoption of the values of the Church Year by the rural parish. . . . Bible and religious problem courses in the rural church.

Religious Education

A vital church school in every rural parish. . . . Recruiting and training of rural lay teachers. . . . Religious literature adapted to the rural home.

Special Rural Observances

Universal observance of Rural Life Sunday. . . . Increased observance of annual Harvest Festival.

Special Rural Work

Indian missions and other unique group work. . . . Student Summer Service which employs seminary and college youth. . . . Advising on rural matters with other units of the church. Development of wholesome rural-urban relations among the churches.

Service to N. Y. Rural Churches

• The Rural Church Institute now offers a new service to the rural churches of New York State. It is a loan library of anthems. The service is available to local churches for a fee of $5.00 a year. Further information may be procured from The Rural Church Institute, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

Training for the Rural Missionary

I. W. MOOMAW

• The first requirement for a more effective rural program is more missionaries who are trained specially for the job that needs to be done. The rural missionary's task is exacting and complex, yet we have not recognized for him the special training requirements that we do for the doctor or the educationalist.

Farm experience is desirable for all rural missionaries. To possess the skills and the sense of originality that accrue from life on a well managed farm will be of great help in making adaptations on the field. Most agricultural colleges regard farm experience as an essential requirement for graduation.

The Agricultural Missionary

The regular four-year course in agriculture or its equivalent is essential. Courses should be selected so as to provide a broad background rather than much specialization. The following areas of study should be well represented: Natural Science; Agriculture (technical courses); Shop Work and Industrial Arts; Extension Methods, including Rural Education; Social Science, including Social Anthropology.

In addition to the general areas above, a student should take about twenty per cent of his credits in classical studies and the humanities. The agricultural missionary should see life as a whole and not regard his "department" as an entity in itself. He must view his work as part of an integrated, comprehensive program for better rural life.

The Home Specialist

The four-year course in home economics is most desirable. A careful balancing of courses is needed to provide a wide cultural background. There may be a little less emphasis upon technical subjects than for the agricultural missionary, but an adequate number should be selected for each of the following fields: Home Economics (technical courses); Home and Family Life; Child Care and Guidance; Extension Education; and Handicrafts.

Post-Graduate Study

Post-graduate study toward an advanced degree is not usually essential before a candidate goes to the field. Exceptions are in the few cases where college teachers or research workers in agriculture may be needed. As a rule post-graduate study can be done to better advantage after experience on the field.

Adequate Christian and orientation study should be both a privilege and an essential requirement for the agriculturist or home specialist. This should be arranged at a seminary or school of missions, preferably after the technical training is finished. Courses here would include Bible study; Rural Church Development; The Christian Message; Social Anthropology; and Studies in Culture —for the area concerned.

The Rural Ministerial Missionary

Conventional theological training is not well suited to the needs of the ministerial missionary who works with village people. The villager is linked to long tradition and his attitudes are in a large measure the result of peculiar social and economic problems. His religion is intimately woven with his precarious job of getting a living from the soil worn by long centuries of cropping. Epidemics that take his children and his animals, and the floods, drought or frost which may take away his meager crops are often the immediate concern of his beliefs and practices.

We cannot "tell" the villager much, but he craves to be understood. The key to village life is a deep understanding of the concerns and fears which haunt the people by day and by night. Through a wise application of the Christian faith to day-by-day problems we find our most effective method for leading village people to the God of love who wishes his children well.

Specific Training Recommendations:

1. College. Graduation from a college where strong courses in Rural Social Science and Social Anthropology are taught from a Christian viewpoint.

2. A year should be spent at a state university, in the study of general courses in Agriculture, Human Nutrition, Soils, Plant Propagation, Agricultural Geography, Rural Sociology, etc.

3. Theological or special missionary training should be taken at a school offering a major in rural church work. Courses should include Bible, Practical Theology, Christian Ethics, Church History and the History of Missions, Rural Church Administration, Worship, The Christian Mission to Rural People, Rural Sociology and Anthropology.

Training of this type will enable a young missionary to perform his work on the field at a higher level of proficiency than otherwise.

Women's Work in Churches

• "The range of activity of women's church societies is wide," writes Mark Rich in the October issue of the *New Century Leader,* publication of the David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Ill. Dr. Rich points out that when a survey was made several years ago, it was found that the average membership of women's societies was 28.

Besides a wide variety of activites to keep the church property in good repair and attractive, women's societies send sunshine baskets, cards and flowers to the sick, writes Dr. Rich. "They go further than that; they study missions. They pray for the missionaries and send gifts following after their prayers. They sew bandages and give clothing or whatever else is called for. . . . They study about migrants, sharecroppers, and the world's poor. They study the problems that beset mankind and try to see how Christianity in general and they in particular can help to meet the needs."

BOOK REVIEWS

The Preacher: His Belief and Behavior. By J. W. Storer. The Boardman Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1953. $1.50.

Here is a book that all preachers can read and reread with profit and interest—the youthful beginner and the seasoned middler alike. It is short but covers a multitude of problems and would-be problems with wise counsel, pithy statements, and invigorating chuckles.

Dr. Storer gives consideration to practical administrative problems as well as to the gamut of ministerial concerns—from the "call" through preparation for the ministry, manner of preaching, worship services, relationships with church members and other ministers, congregational and community leadership, dress and public decorum, maintaining strength of body and soul, and tenure.

In writing about the "call" the author mentions the phrase often used by ministers, "I fought the call, but finally surrended," and points out that when Paul went away into the desert he did not run away from the "call" but went "to find how he could best understand and present Jesus as the Messiah." We have heard a great deal about Paul the preacher; Paul the missionary; and Paul the theologian. "Some one," says Dr. Storer, "ought to write a story about Paul, the student."

On the subject of preaching the author says: "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity." And again, " 'a well-round preacher' does not have reference to his middle but to his mind."

On leadership, the author states that there may be times when a minister longs to be the Pope, but these are the low moments. God did not intend a preacher to be an overlord but a spiritual leader. "A wise leader is he who gives the glory and acclaim to the led."

The preacher's task is tremendous and will often provoke the cry, "Who is sufficient for these things!" But the reading of this pungent little book should go a long way toward making one "sufficient" for the task of a pastor.

—U. Z. McKinnon

Tensions and Destiny. By John Malcus Ellison. John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia. 1953. $2.00.

Many men in today's world are refusing to abandon their claim of racial superiority and admit that the era of freedom, equality and justice for all mankind is upon us. They are making a desperate effort to preserve the white supremacy myth. Their actions are creating severe tensions among the people of our nation and the world. A brief review of happenings in the Union of South Africa, and Southern reactions to the pending decision of the U.S. Supreme Court regarding racial segregation in the public schools brings this matter into sharp focus.

In this volume of twelve well written sermons one will find a sound Christian approach to the "changing racial world situation." In a very penetrating and incisive manner the author shares the fruits of his experiences as a pastor, a college professor and president, and a member of a racial group beset with inequalities, insecurity, fears and tensions.

In the opening sermon from which the title of this volume is taken, Dr. Ellison writes:

"Progress toward destiny is slow and more often uncertain and discouraging. It is easy, natural, and human that striving people may grow weary and appear unduly impatient at the slow gains in the direction of cherished goals. The great danger is that bitterness, cynicism and hatred may become the foes of 'peace of mind' and heroic striving. Thus, faith sometimes grows dim and ideals seem to lose their lure. It is urgent therefore that watchfulness, soberness, and a vibrant faith must always be the strengthening allies in the march toward destiny."

In another sermon, "Finding a Master for Life," the author says:

"We come to no high allegiances and find for ourselves no adequate mastery for our life outside of religion and faith in God. When we take Christ as the center of our universe and the chief object of our ambitions, he becomes the fulfillment of all desires, gathering up into harmonious effectiveness all the powers of our lives."

This book will quicken the spirits of those who are striving against great odds to realize their full stature as sons of God and world citizens. Individuals working to make real brotherhood, harmony, peace and goodwill will be encouraged and inspired after reading this book.

—Ernest T. Dixon, Jr.

The Seeking. By Will Thomas. A. A. Wyn, Inc., New York. 1953. $3.50.

Will Thomas spent his childhood years in the Negro neighborhoods of several cities in the Middle West. Life was literally hard there, and on the streets one had to be tough. After he married, he and his wife felt the conventional discrimination against Negroes in the U.S.A. so keenly that they almost determined to leave and live in Haiti.

They decided instead to start life over again in a small Vermont village. The first impressions of the newcomers were unfavorable. Then Mr. Thomas made intensive studies of the conversations and attitudes of his white neighbors, particularly in the grocery stores. He made the somewhat surprising discovery that the clerks in the grocery stores used the same language when talking to their Yankee neighbors as when they served Will Thomas. Thus he concluded that what he had called discrimination was not to be so labeled. Soon the neighbors all came around after a flood to see how the Thomas family was and to ask if they could be of assistance. Thus bonds of fellowship were created.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher writes a meaningful introduction as a justly proud Vermonter, to glory in the way one small village met a challenge that the whole world is watching in the U.S.A. Her tale of conversations with the Negroes on the Howard University faculty seeking vacations is altogether different, however—many of them go outside the U.S.A. when they want a vacation, in order to avoid the segregation and discrimination they encounter here.

—Benson Y. Landis

The Decline of Agrarian Democracy. By Grant McConnell. University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif. 1953. $3.75.

This study is a technical one in theory of organization. It is concerned with three great forces in agrarian politics—the state colleges of agriculture including their extension services, the Department of Agriculture of the United States, and "most important of all, the American Farm Bureau Federation." (The blood pressure of members of the Grange will probably rise high on contemplation of the words "most important of all.") Each of these three organizations "has had an influence upon the development of the others, and each has been dependent upon all the others."

The difficulty of generalization is evident in the discussion of "decentralization," as advocated by the Farm Bureau, in the sense of the transfer of power from Washington to the states. The very organization recommending this type of decentralization, however, is alleged to be a reflection of an "intense social stratification" that has occurred within agriculture, "the source of much of our equalitarian tradition."

In the old agrarians of fifty years ago, power was suspect. In the new agrarianism of the 1950's, "the decline of this conviction has come about not through mass organization, but through class organization." The "presupposition" that "the means of power shall not be made the property of the few" is stated to have "failed in agriculture."

"In Congress, agriculture is overrepresented. . . . " The power of the Farm Bureau is greater now in the Senate, now in the House, possibly most frequently in the House. "A rural congressman is more likely to be indebted to the Farm Bureau for assistance than is a senator."

"From the time of Thomas Jefferson and John Taylor down to the era of the Populists, farm movements were preoccupied with the problem of the system of power emerging from capitalist organization. In our time not only has this historic cause been abandoned, but an entirely new structure of power has been built within agriculture itself. This is the greatest change of all."

—Benson Y. Landis

From Correspondence

Dear Editors:

It's a great job you have done in the first decade of publication! I trust this achievement is an indication of the larger usefulness of the town and country church for the next decade. Good luck!

—Charles K. Hartman
Colorado Baptist Convention

Round-the-World Mission Tour

• A world tour which will give American church members an opportunity to follow their dollars into the mission fields has been announced by John Rosengrant of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

The tour, using Pan American World Airways' first-class services, will leave from San Francisco on March 1 for Hawaii and visit fourteen countries in fifty-nine days.

"American church members have always given generously both in work and money for foreign missions," Mr. Rosengrant said. "For the fifth straight year the Board of Foreign Missions will give United States churchmen and churchwomen a chance to see the good their contributions are accomplishing and at the same time give them an insight into the life and customs of foreign lands.

"The travel, the visits, the program and the on-the-spot conferences will be planned to give churchmen a vivid and realistic picture of their church at work across the world."

On the itinerary of the world tour, which will cost $3390.00, are Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, the Holy Land, Egypt, Italy, Switzerland and France.

One of the highlights of the tour is expected to be Easter services in the chapel adjoining the Garden of Gethsemane.

The World Tour, according to Mr. Rosengrant, is travel with a purpose. "This purpose," he said, "is to gain an intimate knowledge of how other peoples in the world live and believe, and this objective the Board of Foreign Missions is in a unique position to fulfill, since it has representatives in each country, devoted missionaries, who know the land well, not merely its surface aspects."

Denominational Social Concern

• The Rev. Edward Eldredge Brewster of the Boston University Graduate School has written a dissertation on "Patterns of Social Concern in Four American Protestant Denominations." The denominations are: Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Methodist Church, American Baptist Convention, and Congregational Christian Churches.

Some of the conclusions are given below:

"Social concern appears to be a pervasive and growing fact in American Protestantism," judged by the number of social pronouncements from 1923 through 1948.

"Among these four Protestant bodies there was a concentration of sustained concern on twenty-three separate social issues over the twenty-five-year period."

"The tendency toward an accommodative response pattern appears to be much greater in respect to property issues than to those of world peace and public morals. The pressure of historical events is seen to be an important casual factor in this trend with theological influences playing only a secondary role."

Tendencies toward accommodation are noted in the fact that "in only five of eleven specific issues studied did the churches differ from the views of the political parties."

Since accommodation seems lately to be the dominant response of the churches, "the maintenance of a sect-type ethic upon the major issues of social concern and the encouragement of courageous sect-type minorities within the churches is seen to be essential to the ethical life of the church and to the relevance of its message and ministry."

To Successful Country Ministers

• Do you know of any conspicuously successful country churches in the United States? There must be hundreds of them. If you are the pastor of an aggressive small town or country church, tell us what you and your church are doing. What community problems have you faced and solved? How was it done? If any pastor is too modest to tell what he has done, tell us what your church has done. We want direct evidence that many country churches are very much alive. We want to help the weaker churches to strength. Address responses to the editor of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Voluntary Enterprise in Virginia

• The Virginia Council on Health and Medical Care, Richmond, was organized in 1946, but its placement service program for physicians is only three years old. A report recently issued by the Council states that fifty-four physicians have been placed in forty-three Virginia rural communities with rural health needs. Th effort is described as "private, voluntary, coordinating."

The members of the Council include 54 state-wide and 150 local organizations, 80 corporations, 20 hospitals, 5 banks, and several hundred individuals.

The chairman of the Council is Paul D. Sanders, editor of the *Southern Planter,* a farm magazine.

Saturday Evening Post

• The people of Sharon, Mass., recently decided between the hurly-burly of growth and a country town. They voted in favor of the latter, and the story of the battle is told by Joe Alex Morris in the *Saturday Evening Post,* Philadelphia, August 8, 1953. The title is: "They Said No To 'Progress.' "

In the same issue, Arthur Baum opens a series on "The New Leisure," saying there has been a revival of gardening, and that there are 30,000,000 gardeners in the U.S.A. Apparently many people are finding that gardening is re-creating, and are putting other than monetary values on the process.

Yearbook of American Churches, 1953

• The Yearbook of American Churches is the sole source of statistics for all religious bodies in the U.S.A. The book contains, in addition to directories, statistical and historical information. Benson Y. Landis is the editor. Many churches will want this 1953 edition. Address your order to Yearbook of American Churches, National Council of Churches, 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y. The price is $4.00.

Look Around, Lonely Listener

• When Elijah thought he was starkly alone worshipping God, seven thousand others were even then kneeling in rows all around him. Few kinds of dejection are more delusive than the I-only-I-am-still-faithful attitudes.

Solipsism in Sound

This sensation is like that of a solitary listener hearing a broadcast or record—huddled in a garret or suave in a chartreuse modern interior, propped up in bed or lolling on a beach. Wherever he is, he hears the music as though nobody else were listening, as though all were being played and sung and acted out for him alone.

Such lonely hearing does make the sound seem pure communication from composer to individual, without the age-old distraction of the crowd at the concert. Gone are the ranks of earnest musicians and the throngs of fellow-listeners who keep us from leaving. Gone too is the hair-do or hat obstructing our view of the stage, the latecomer stumbling over our feet. Here in our little room, even as the broadcast applause breaks out, we do not share it; it would be silly to be found clapping when we are alone.

A Member of the Group

Yet the thoroughgoing musician, the trained lover of music, feels when he listens to records or the radio or TV that he is there at the concert among the crowd. Much of his reaction to music he has learned by being part of an audience. Much of his enjoyment is in sharing the surge and ebb of feeling in the listening concertgoers, the hushed expectation at the first note, the pent-up admiration shouted into huzzahs at the end. Only as he hears music as a member of the group does he hear it whole.

Christianity is Always Shared

• Often the Protestant has been caricatured as being much like the lonely listener. He is said to be the detached and inspired Christian whose experience is religious singularity. "Every man his own pope," is the charge.

The fact is that the Protestant is not the lonely listener but the live member of a group, all listening. In this tradition of faith the audience itself must be attentive, sharing what they hear. They refuse to assign the task of listening to a few who are ordained for that task. God speaks to the whole company of believers, and is served by the whole company as well.

Thus, any worshipper who is alone has pulled himself out from the great assembly of the Church. Even when he is by himself, faith keeps him one with the faithful. We meet God as members of our household, of our congregation, or our whole global fellowship of faith lifting its *sursum corda.*

If I am lonely when I pray, or find only God and myself in that wondrous dialogue of acceptance I need vision to see a host of my brethren constantly at my side. Wholeness in my prayer, and blessedness in the divine reply, come fully only as I stand amid that throng of fellow listeners.

—From *Kirkridge Contour*

Nuggets

Dignity consists not in possessing honors, but in the consciousness that we deserve them. ARISTOTLE

He who establishes his argument by noise and command shows that reason is weak. MONTAIGNE